21 Hutchinson E-4, 5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO

793
794
[428]

this are being made, however, and it is hoped he will be ready for it before her death. In the meantime she has legally willed the house and its material belongings to him, and is also passing along to him her spiritual heritage. He is learning the mystical part of the cult, but she cannot show him the outer forms, such as dancing and other physical motions of worship, because she is too infirm. Traditionally only women went through training for worship in the Brazilian cults, for the belief is that the gods descend and "ride" or "mount" the disciple. This could only be done with women disciples. However, one of the changes reaching the cults now is the entrance of men as devotees. Very often they are effeminate, as is the case with the young man who is helping the old woman. The old one is not pleased with having a man perform the duties of her cult house, but she feels she must be satisfied with him because there is no one else in her house. Although all her former disciples are gone, now at least she will have someone to dispatch her saints when she dies, a complicated ritual which must be properly carried out.

[782]
[462]
[178]

One of the other two houses is in the town and is led by Roxa, who has "made her saint" but who by cult standards should still be a devotee in another house, for she is not considered well enough prepared to be leading a house of her own. Her house is extremely weak, with few followers, most of whom have not yet "made their saints." Roxa is the main figure, the one most often possessed and through whom the spirits speak. As a young girl she went through a fairly rigorous period of training, but broke away before it was completed. She says she fulfills the necessary obligations now only because if she did not she would become sick. She calls the whole thing a "complication" in her life which must be looked after. She has been married but is now widowed and childless.

The other house, located on one of the plantations run by an overseer, is led by a man in his forties. He also claims that he is in the cult because of his health. As a boy and young man he was always sick and his entire body ached. One day in the field he found a "lightning stone" (pedra de raio). Such stones are common in the cults and are thought to have been sent from the sky, although they really are American Indian artifacts, such as arrowheads and hatchets, and are constantly turned up in the soil. At first he did not know what the stone was and took it home, but on discovering that it had supernatural significance, he threw it away, for he wanted nothing

793
794
778
[172]